

Kenneth Bressett
P.O. Box 60145
Colorado Springs, CO 80960-0145

September 27, 1993

Dear Ken:

For your column in The Numismatist see Paper Money Sept/Oct 1993 page 153. It is recommended that reprints of the souvenirs be cut out and mounted to look genuine. Deception is intended as no mention of reprints is there. It even has "The Raphael Ellenbogen Collection" as well as "United States Currency".

What a phony.

Sincerely,

Eric P. Newman

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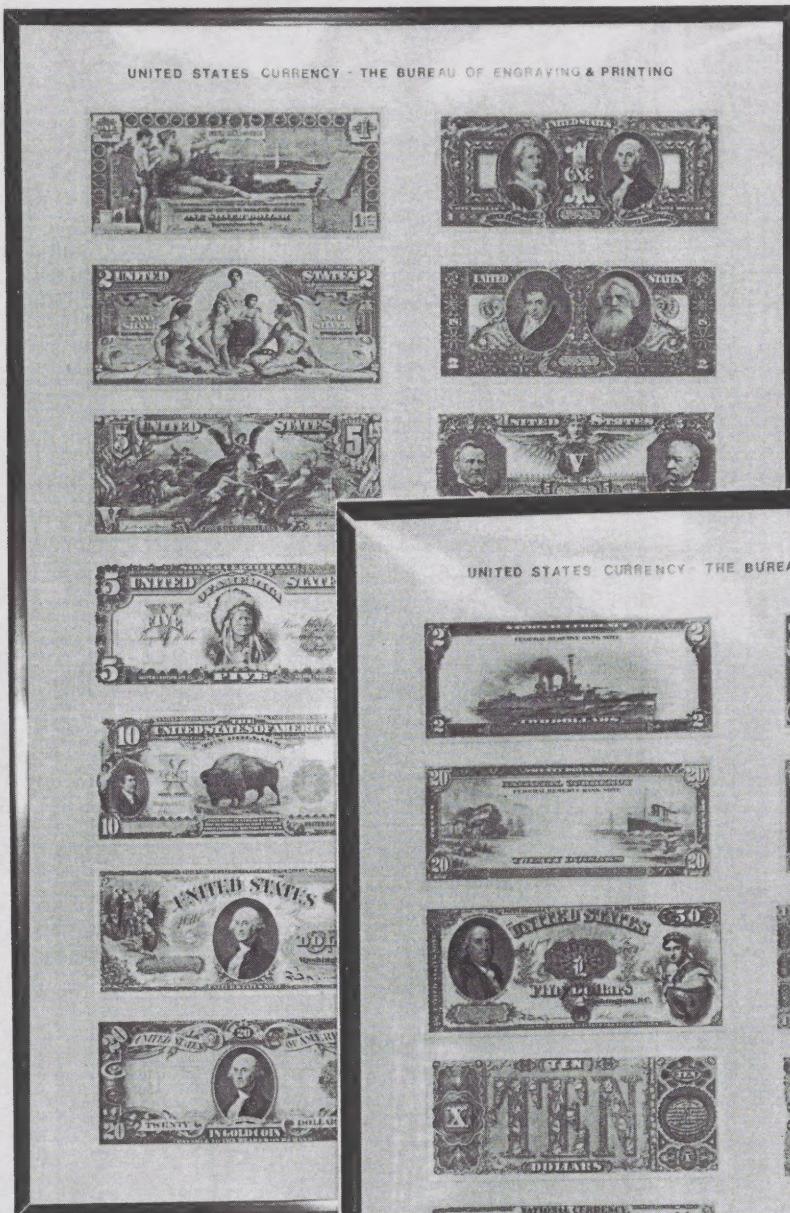
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HOW TO DISPLAY YOUR PRECIOUS NOTES

by RAPHAEL ELLENBOGEN



HERE is the inherent pride of the "syngraphist" in his or her collection which demands a permanent display of these treasures. Of course that is not practical or advisable, because of security reasons and the eventual discoloration and deterioration of valuable notes. There is, however, a method of displaying magnificent large-size notes in their original full color intaglio printing at very low cost and no risk.

Secure "duplicate" Souvenir Cards (issued by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing) bearing your favorite notes (in intaglio from the original master dies). Carefully cut out the bills

(leaving a margin) and assemble them on a table, in the order of your display.

Purchase a frame of the size required. The author's frame measures 20" x 30". They have plastic glass, or cardboard backs and clip-on metal frames. An art store will provide a heavy paper backing in your color and size. You can place descriptions below appropriately positioned notes, held in place by postage stamp hinges. It certainly will draw many comments from your delighted friends, as your "collection" adorns the walls of your syngraphic den. ■



The article shows, in illustrated detail, how to con people into thinking you have an outstanding collection of United States currency. At least that is the way I read it. It's apparently quite simple. All you do is buy sheets of souvenir cards issued by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, then cut the notes out, leaving enough of a border to make them look like the original bills. Next, you mount the fake bills face-side up in a frame and hang them on a wall, where people will think they are real.

Gosh. That sounds like loads of fun, doesn't it? Perhaps someone will even buy the framed fakes some day thinking they are genuine United States notes. After all, the backs are not visible, so no one can tell. Somehow, this doesn't sound

like anything a real collector would want to do. Besides being deceptive, it ruins your perfectly good souvenir sheets. Count me out on this one. I would rather go without the currency collection.

File #366

A milestone as important as the 50th anniversary of World War II was sure to inspire many souvenirs, and so it has. Many are numismatic. The latest to come to my attention appeared in a novelty sales catalog. It is classic in that it is not particularly connected with the war, and the coins are low-grade and overpriced.

Why, then, would anyone buy this? I can't answer that. This "set" consists of a Walking Liberty half dollar, Washington quarter, Jeffer-

son nickel, Mercury dime and Lincoln cent. Why they are arranged in this order is beyond me. Nor can I tell the dates on the coins. If I read correctly, you can order sets dated 1944 or 1945, and one other date, which seems to be 1941. It does not tell buyers that some of these coins really are wartime issues and different than regular coins.

The coins come mounted in a frame with a colorful background of scenes from the war, and an assortment of stamps with themes related to World War II. There is no mention of condition, but judging from the picture, the coins seem to have gone through the war. The display probably is attractive, but at \$69.95, it is no bargain. I would advise potential buyers to stay away from this one.

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| Mercury Dimes | 310 | 875 | 2,600 |
| Barber Quarters | 1,245 | 4,450 | 11,500 |
| Standing Liberty 25¢ | 1,210 | 1,850 | 4,450 |
| Walking Liberty 50¢ | 310 | 690 | 6,800 |
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Send for Free Sale List of Collector Coins

How Much Is Too Much for Common Coins?

THE CONCERN MOST frequently expressed by readers relates to prices charged for common coins by advertisers outside the normal numismatic market—in other words, offerings by promoters who sell to the general public rather than to established collectors. The items advertised usually appeal to sentiment and do not represent true collector value or worth in a competitive market.

In defense of these promotions, we must remember that mass advertising is prohibitively expensive, and these companies are in business to make money. They have little concern for the hobby or its future, except the desire to sell more products to their customers. Some do make interesting offers of unusual items and probably start many people thinking about collecting coins. But eventually, these beginners must learn more about the hobby and find other places where they can buy nicer coins at better prices.

The harmful part of these promotions is that sooner or later, uninformed buyers want to sell their treasures. This is when they find out they have paid dearly for them. It is usually too late to go back to the original seller. They take their "family heirlooms" to an established coin dealer for appraisal and conclude they are being cheated. It just doesn't occur to them that they made a mistake when they purchased the coins. The dealer always seems to be the bad guy in this scenario.

Some typical ads I have seen recently offer common \$20 gold coins

at \$500 each for circulated pieces; or \$250 for a similar quarter eagle. One says a Queen Victoria gold sovereign



is a bargain at only \$169; another lists U.S. silver Eagle bullion coins for \$14.95 each. These prices are considerably higher than collectors would expect to pay from an advertiser in a numismatic publication or through a local coin dealer.

Are these prices too high? Sure! But they are not always illegal, immoral or even harmful, as long as the advertiser doesn't make a false claim about the item's quality or value. As offensive as the practice is to those of us who know how to shop for coins, there just is no easy way to educate the general public. We can pass the message on to family and friends, but the major publications that print these ads are too happy with business to accept any advice or suggestions for change. I guess we can only keep trying to get their attention.

File #364

How many of you are *Star Trek* fans? Come on. It's okay to admit it; my hand is up. If you are a real "Trekker," you will enjoy the new silver bullion bars that are endorsed and sold by Paramount Pictures. I like them because they are not

only "art bars," but also qualify as "theater memorabilia" reminiscent of other tokens and medals in many different forms.

These new "Silver Cinema Art" bars, as they are called, come in six different designs representing each of the six *Star Trek* films, with re-creations of the full, original theater posters, and four additional mini "teaser" posters. The themes are futuristic and portray cast and events from the epic movies. As an extra nicety, the manufacturer includes an attractive display case to house the 10-bar collection.

You will have to sign up for the full series to be sure of getting them all, because only 15,000 sets will be struck. At \$32.95 each (plus \$3.95 shipping), the price is not cheap—it's more than I'd pay. You also get a free, printed version of each bar to show you each month's offering . . . and to entice you to send in your order. This is a nice-looking promotion that has some definite numismatic possibilities. There probably will be an aftermarket for these bars well into the future.

File #365

I was startled to see an article in a recent edition of *Paper Money*, a neat journal published by the Society of Paper Money Collectors and devoted to collecting paper money in its many forms. It is written for and by collectors, and is highly respected in the hobby. Because it is such a responsible publication, I did a double-take at what one of the authors proposed.